

## Domestic Violence

### 310.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide the guidelines necessary to deter, prevent and reduce domestic violence through vigorous enforcement and to address domestic violence as a serious crime against society. The policy specifically addresses the commitment of this department to take enforcement action when appropriate, to provide assistance to victims and to guide officers in the investigation of domestic violence.

#### 310.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

**Court order** - All forms of orders related to domestic violence, that have been issued by a court of this state or another, whether civil or criminal, regardless of whether service has been made.

### 310.2 POLICY

The Louisville Police Department's response to incidents of domestic violence and violations of related court orders shall stress enforcement of the law to protect the victim and shall communicate the philosophy that domestic violence is criminal behavior. It is also the policy of this department to facilitate victims' and offenders' access to appropriate civil remedies and community resources whenever feasible.

### 310.3 OFFICER SAFETY

The investigation of domestic violence cases often places officers in emotionally charged and sometimes highly dangerous environments. No provision of this policy is intended to supersede the responsibility of all officers to exercise due caution and reasonable care in providing for the safety of any officers and parties involved.

### 310.4 INVESTIGATIONS

The following guidelines should be followed by officers when investigating domestic violence cases:

- a. Calls of reported, threatened, imminent, or ongoing domestic violence and the violation of any court order are of extreme importance and should be considered among the highest response priorities. This includes incomplete 9-1-1 calls.
- b. When practicable, officers should obtain and document statements from the victim, the suspect, and any witnesses, including children, in or around the household or location of occurrence.
- c. Officers should list the full name and date of birth (and school if available) of each child who was present in the household at the time of the offense. The names of other children who may not have been in the house at that particular time should also be obtained for follow-up.
- d. When practicable and legally permitted, video or audio record all significant statements and observations.

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- e. All injuries should be photographed, regardless of severity, taking care to preserve the victim's personal privacy. Where practicable, photographs should be taken by a person of the same sex. Victims whose injuries are not visible at the time of the incident should be asked to contact the Detective Section in the event that the injuries later become visible.
- f. Officers should request that the victim complete and sign an authorization for release of medical records related to the incident when applicable.
- g. If the suspect is no longer at the scene, officers should make reasonable efforts to locate the suspect to further the investigation, provide the suspect with an opportunity to make a statement, and make an arrest or seek an arrest warrant if appropriate.
- h. Seize any firearms or other dangerous weapons in the home, if appropriate and legally permitted, for safekeeping or as evidence.
- i. When completing an incident or arrest report for violation of a court order, officers should include specific information that establishes that the offender has been served, including the date the offender was served, the name of the agency that served the order and the provision of the order that the subject is alleged to have violated. When reasonably available, the arresting officer should attach a copy of the order to the incident or arrest report.
- j. Officers should take appropriate enforcement action when there is probable cause to believe an offense has occurred. Factors that should not be used as sole justification for declining to take enforcement action include:
  - 1. Whether the suspect lives on the premises with the victim.
  - 2. Claims by the suspect that the victim provoked or perpetuated the violence.
  - 3. The potential financial or child custody consequences of arrest.
  - 4. The physical or emotional state of either party.
  - 5. Use of drugs or alcohol by either party.
  - 6. Denial that the abuse occurred where evidence indicates otherwise.
  - 7. A request by the victim not to arrest the suspect.
  - 8. Location of the incident (public/private).
  - 9. Speculation that the complainant may not follow through with the prosecution.
  - 10. Actual or perceived characteristics such as race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, economic status, age, cultural group, disability, or marital status of the victim or suspect.
  - 11. The social status, community status, or professional position of the victim or suspect.

### 310.4.1 IF A SUSPECT IS ARRESTED

If a suspect is arrested, officers should:

- a. Advise the victim that there is no guarantee the suspect will remain in custody.
- b. Provide the victim's contact information to the jail staff to enable notification of the victim upon the suspect's release from jail.
- c. Advise the victim whether any type of court order will be in effect when the suspect is released from jail.

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### 310.4.2 IF NO ARREST IS MADE

If no arrest is made, the officer should:

- a. Advise the parties of any options, including but not limited to:
  1. Voluntary separation of the parties.
  2. Appropriate resource referrals (e.g., counselors, friends, relatives, shelter homes, victim witness unit).
- b. Document the resolution in a report.

## **310.5 VICTIM ASSISTANCE**

Victims may be traumatized or confused. Officers should:

- a. Recognize that a victim's behavior and actions may be affected.
- b. Provide the victim with the department's domestic violence information handout, even if the incident may not rise to the level of a crime.
- c. Alert the victim to any available victim advocates, shelters and community resources.
- d. Stand by for a reasonable amount of time when an involved person requests law enforcement assistance while removing essential items of personal property.
- e. Seek medical assistance as soon as practicable for the victim if he/she has sustained injury or complains of pain.
- f. Ask the victim whether he/she has a safe place to stay. Assist in arranging to transport the victim to an alternate shelter if the victim expresses a concern for his/her safety or if the officer determines that a need exists.
- g. Make reasonable efforts to ensure that children or dependent adults who are under the supervision of the suspect or victim are being properly cared for.
- h. Seek or assist the victim in obtaining an emergency order if appropriate.

## **310.6 DISPATCH ASSISTANCE**

All calls of domestic violence, including incomplete 9-1-1 calls, should be dispatched as soon as practicable.

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Dispatchers are not required to verify the validity of a court order before responding to a request for assistance. Officers should request that dispatchers check whether any of the involved persons are subject to the terms of a court order.

### **310.7 FOREIGN COURT ORDERS**

Various types of orders may be issued in domestic violence cases. Any foreign court order properly issued by a court of another state, Indian tribe or territory shall be enforced by officers as if it were the order of a court in this state. An order should be considered properly issued when it reasonably appears that the issuing court has jurisdiction over the parties and reasonable notice and opportunity to respond was given to the party against whom the order was issued (18 USC § 2265). An otherwise valid out-of-state court order shall be enforced, regardless of whether the order has been properly registered with this state.

### **310.8 VERIFICATION OF COURT ORDERS**

Determining the validity of a court order, particularly an order from another jurisdiction, can be challenging. Therefore, in determining whether there is probable cause to make an arrest for a violation of any court order, officers should carefully review the actual order when available, and, where appropriate and practicable:

- a. Ask the subject of the order about his/her notice or receipt of the order, his/her knowledge of its terms and efforts to respond to the order.
- b. Check available records or databases that may show the status or conditions of the order.
- c. Contact the issuing court to verify the validity of the order.
- d. Contact a law enforcement official from the jurisdiction where the order was issued to verify information.

Officers should document in an appropriate report their efforts to verify the validity of an order, regardless of whether an arrest is made. Officers should contact a supervisor for clarification when needed.

#### **310.8.1 VERIFICATION OF TRIBAL PROTECTION ORDERS**

If any party to a domestic dispute is a member of a tribe or consider themselves a Native American person, officers should ask whether there are any protection orders from a tribal court.

Officers should take reasonable steps to verify the protection order, including calling the relevant tribe's dispatch line, and not rely solely on National Crime Information Center or other databases.

### **310.9 LEGAL MANDATES AND RELEVANT LAWS**

Colorado law provides for the following:

#### **310.9.1 STANDARDS FOR ARRESTS**

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Officers investigating a domestic violence report should consider the following:

- a. If an officer has probable cause to believe an offender has committed an offense of domestic violence, an arrest shall be made (CRS § 18-6-803.6).
- b. An officer is not required to arrest both parties involved in an alleged act of domestic violence when both claim to have been victims of such domestic violence (CRS § 18-6-803.6). If an officer receives complaints of domestic violence from two or more opposing persons, the officer shall evaluate each complaint separately to determine if a crime has been committed by one or more persons.
- c. In determining whether a crime has been committed by one or more persons, the officer shall consider the following (CRS § 18-6-803.6):
  1. Any prior complaints of domestic violence.
  2. The relative severity of the injuries inflicted on each person.
  3. The likelihood of future injury to each person.
  4. The possibility that one of the persons acted in self-defense.
- d. Unless impractical, if probable cause exists to believe an offender has violated a court order and that such offender had notice of the court order, an arrest shall be made (CRS § 18-6-803.5). If the circumstances make arrest impractical, the officer shall seek a warrant of arrest for the offender (CRS § 18-6-803.5).
- e. If a restrained person is arrested for violating or attempting to violate any provision of a court order, the arresting officer shall make all reasonable efforts to contact the protected party to notify him/her of such arrest (CRS § 18-6-803.5).

### 310.9.2 REPORTS AND RECORDS

In the event that an individual is arrested by the Louisville Police Department for violating a court order, the Administrative Services Manager shall forward to the issuing court a copy of the arrest report, a list of witnesses to the violation, and, if applicable, a list of any charges filed or requested against the restrained person. The Administrative Services Manager shall also ensure that a copy of the same information is provided to the protected party. The agency shall delete the address and telephone number of a witness from the list sent to the court upon request of such witness, and such address and telephone number shall not thereafter be made available to any person, except law enforcement officials and the prosecuting agency, without order of the court (CRS § 18-6-803.5).

If a restrained person is on bond in connection with a violation or attempted violation of a protection order in this or any other state and is subsequently arrested by the Louisville Police Department for violating or

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attempting to violate a protection order, the Administrative Services Manager shall notify the prosecuting attorney so that a motion may be filed with the court that issued the prior bond for the revocation of the bond and for the issuance of a warrant, if appropriate (CRS § 18-6-803.5).

### 310.9.3 SERVICE OF COURT ORDERS

Officers responding to a domestic violence call who encounter a person named in a court order that has not been otherwise served shall serve the person with a copy of the order (CRS § 13-14-107).

